



Committee on Homeland Security

Democrats

**Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking
Member**

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DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE AMENDMENT ON RAIL SECURITY

April 27, 2005, Washington, DC — Congresswoman Eleanor Norton Holmes (D-DC), Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, made the following statement during the open markup session today to consider the Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006:

“The deadly bombings on commuter trains in Madrid last year and the deaths and injuries from South Carolina’s toxic rail accident are loud wake up calls for this country. One third of terrorist attacks worldwide target transport systems, with public transport the most frequent target. The reason is clear, public transportation is where the people are. The United States must assist public transportation providers, their front line employees, and local communities in protecting our passenger transit systems. Let us take urgent actions now to ensure that the next Madrid-style attack does not occur in New York, the Nation’s Capitol, Chicago, or any other metropolitan area in our nation.”

Committee Democrats will offer legislation aimed to improve the security of passenger transportation systems including light rail, Amtrak, subways, buses, as well as commuter ferries. The Democrats’ amendment also calls for the Department to develop and disseminate public transportation security best practices to passenger transportation systems operators. In addition, provisions in the amendment require the Department to develop a plan to increase public awareness regarding transportation security, and to establish the University Transportation Security Centers to conduct transportation research, education, and development of training programs. The amendment also grants public transportation employees with whistleblower protections.

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